

The Hope of Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is a fact of first importance in the message of salvation—15:1-3

The gospel is God's power to save—Rom. 1:16

- It must be preached
- It must be received
- It must be stood in
- It must be held fast

What is most importance in the gospel is:

- That Christ died for our sins according to Scripture
- That he was buried
- That He was raised from the dead according to the Scripture

Paul presents the truth in this way to enable the Corinthians to see that it was the declaration of and their faith in the resurrection of Christ that saves them from sin.

This fact was attested by enough witnesses to be believable—15:5-11

Note the witnesses of the resurrection

Paul mentions six of the nine post resurrection appearances of Christ. He starts with appearances on the day of the resurrection (Cephas and the twelve, here used in the technical sense of those he called, omitting Judas and Thomas who was absent). These witnesses are impressive because they saw Jesus soon after his appearance.

Then he mentions an appearance to 500 at once. Perhaps this is the appearance mentioned at the end of Mt. 28. What is impressive here is the multitude of witnesses. They continued their testimony even until Paul's day. No more than 25 years had passed since the resurrection and many of these were living; though some had died.

James, most likely one of the Lord's own brothers in the flesh. This is the only placed mentioned in Scripture. And it is impressive because Jesus brother's had not believed in Him during his ministry (Jn. 7) yet they are all believing after Jesus' death. How can we explain it?

To all the apostles perhaps points to the time of Jesus' ascension among other occasions.

And last of all. Paul was truly the last to see the Lord. But look at how he describes himself. He uses a Greek term that means "a miscarriage or possibly a premature baby". If Paul viewed the appearance of Jesus to the other apostles as to men who were mature in the experience of knowing and serving him, then Paul was like a baby who didn't reach full term when he received his appearance. He was an unbeliever, who he goes on to say persecuted the church of God and in his view made him "least" of the apostles and "unfit" to wear the name. But by God's grace all that had been changed and Paul outworked them all in teaching the gospel to others.

No matter which witness the Corinthians heard, whether Paul or one of the others, they believed. And that was what Paul was trying to stress. But now some were denying that there was a resurrection from the dead.

Paul affirms the consequences of denying that there was a resurrection—15:12-19

If there is no resurrection, then Christ is not raised. Eliminate all resurrection and Christ's must also go. They stand or fall together as Paul will make clear. But think of the implications of that kind of unbelief among the Christians.

And if Christ is not raised:

We are false witnesses
Our preaching is vain
Your faith is vain, worthless
You are still in your sins
Those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished
We are of all men to be pitied

What will they do who are baptized for the dead if they are not raised? Why would such people practice such if there was no hope of seeing them. What will they do?

Why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? Why would we live in such great trial knowing that the resurrection is a fabrication.

Paul affirms the fact that Christ has been raised, and its consequences for the believer.

Christ is raised

Then all others will be raised
But each must come in his order

God's plan for His kingdom

Paul answers objections by explaining the nature of the resurrection

Even now we see the evidence to suggest that bodies differ.

Botany furnishes an analogy of how life comes from death and how that the body raised is not the same as the body planted.

Zoology demonstrates that bodies may exist in different form.

Astronomy demonstrates that bodies may have differing glories.

Hence, four facts about the resurrected body

Sown perishable; raised imperishable

Sown in dishonor; raised in glory

Sown in weakness; raised in power

Sown a natural body; raised a spiritual body

Typology suggests that there are two bodies.

First man (Adam) vs. last man (Christ)

A living soul vs. a life-giving spirit

natural body vs. spiritual body

from the earth vs. from heaven

Just as we have born the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly.

Paul by revelation explains how the new body will come about.

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom nor the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Thus, all will not die; but all will be changed.

The resurrection will fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah

The sting of death is sin

The power of sin is the Law

God gives us the victory through Christ

Exhortations needed

Do not be deceived: evil companionship corrupts good morals.

Become sober-minded and stop sinning.

Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing your labor is not in vain in the Lord